PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

October 4, 2019

Regular Meeting

A regular meeting of the City Planning Commission was held this day at 9:00 a.m. in the J. Martin Griesel Room of Two Centennial Plaza with the following members present: Vice Chair Byron Stallworth, Mr. John Eby, Vice-Mayor Christopher Smitherman, Ms. Melissa Wideman, and Assistant City Manager John Juech.

Also in attendance were Mr. Marion Haynes, legal counsel, and Department of City Planning staff: Mr. Alex Peppers, Mr. James Weaver, Mr. Felix Bere, Ms. Stacey Hoffman, Mr. Jared Ellis, Ms. Kira Palmer, Mr. Michael Allen, and Ms. Jeanetta Anderson.

Mr. Stallworth called the meeting to order and asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Stallworth asked that the August 2, 2019 and the August 16, 2019 minutes be approved.

The Commission approved the minutes from August 2, 2019 and August 16, 2019.
Mr. Smitherman made the motion, which Mr. Juech seconded.
Ayes: Mr. Smitherman, Mr. Juech, Mr. Eby, and Mr. Stallworth.

Consent Item – Quasi-Judicial

Item 1 was a report and recommendation on two proposed Dedication Plats at the intersection of West North Bend Road and Hamilton Avenue in College Hill. The Department of City Planning staff recommended approval.

The Commission adopted staff’s recommendation for Item 1 on the Quasi-Judicial Consent Agenda
Mr. Juech made the motion, which Mr. Stallworth seconded.
Ayes: Mr. Smitherman, Mr. Juech, Mr. Eby, and Mr. Stallworth.

Consent Item – Legislative

Item 2 was a report and recommendation on the proposed sale of two City-owned parcels to the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in Bond Hill.

The item was requested to be held until October 18, 2019 by the City’s Real Estate Division on behalf of the Department of Transportation and Engineering.
Discussion Items – Legislative

Mr. Weaver presented Item 3, a report and recommendation on proposed changes to Fountain Square located at 520 Vine Street in the Central Business District. The staff of the Department of City Planning recommended approval with the following conditions:

1. The access easement width from Fountain Square to Sixth Street be increased from the proposed 10 feet to equal the full width of the existing passageway between Sixth Street and Fountain Square; and
2. The existing passageway from Sixth Street to Fountain Square and its entrances be redesigned to improve their effectiveness by drawing people to them with more accessible, inviting, and visible doors, signage, and/or architectural features to offset the proposed elimination of the breezeway off Walnut Street.

Ms. Wideman arrived at 9:16 a.m.

Mr. Stallworth asked Mr. Weaver if the Police Department had weighed in on the safety concerns. Mr. Juech asked Sergeant Timothy Fritz to respond to the question.

Sgt. Timothy Fritz, with the Cincinnati Police Department, thanked Mr. Juech and Fifth Third Bank and acknowledged the safety concerns and said he felt confident the access plans as presented in the proposal addressed those concerns.

Mr. Juech provided an overview of the proposed changes and thanked those who had been involved with the proposal. He added that the proposed changes would enhance the area around Fountain Square and increase safety.

Mr. Stallworth asked Mr. Juech what other City departments had been involved with the proposed changes beside Police and Fire, to which Mr. Juech responded the City Manager’s Office, the Law Department, the Department of Buildings and Inspections, the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE), Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW), and the Department of City Planning.

Mr. Eby asked to discuss Exhibit B and asked for clarification on the site plan. Mr. Eby was concerned with emergency egress issues.

Thomas Neltner, of the Fifth Third development team, provided clarification on the site plan. Sgt. Fritz added that Police or Fire would have egress through the Fifth Third lobby in the event of an emergency and further elaborated on the emergency procedures.

Mr. Smitherman asked for clarification on the emergency door procedure in the Fifth Third lobby as it pertained to egress from Fountain Square. Mr. Neltner noted the 24/7 presence of a security guard in the lobby and the safety procedures that would be in place.

Sgt. Fritz elaborated on the emergency procedures with Fifth Third.
Mr. Smitherman asked if emergency drills would be conducted, to which Sgt. Fritz responded he would be willing to work with Fifth Third to run drills after the proposals were in place.

Mr. Eby asked what the protocol of Fifth Third was during an emergency and whether they lock down or lock up. Mr. Neltner outlined the safety procedure of the Fifth Third lobby to the Commission.

Sgt. Fritz recalled the incident that had happened on Fountain Square a year ago, the safety issues that had been brought to light since that event, and the new procedures would address those safety issues.

Mr. Eby asked again about the lock up/lock down protocol. Sgt. Fritz noted the new signage that would indicate the points of egress.

Mr. Juech discussed the process of working through the safety procedures with City Administration and Fifth Third and noted that the Sixth Street connector would be the best point for emergency egress.

Mr. Eby wanted clarification on the lock up/lock down protocol, to which Mr. Neltner responded that the doors would open during an emergency situation. Mr. Neltner also noted that they would work with the City on the wayfinding recommendations.

Mr. Smitherman remarked on the incidents happening across the country and hoped that there would be additional training on emergency situations.

Mr. Eby stated that he would be a no vote on the proposal because of the uncertainty regarding the doors being locked during an emergency situation. Mr. Neltner outlined the open door procedure during large events.

William Weber, with the Law Department, added that Fifth Third had a mechanism in place to alert them of large-scale events and that Fire and Police would be installing Knox Box or similar technology to allow for the doors to be opened. Mr. Eby explained to the Commission what a Knox Box was and how it operated.

Sgt. Fritz noted the familiarity of Police and Fire with Knox Box use, and stated it might be the best option for Fire but not necessarily Police. Mr. Weber added that Fifth Third had committed to working with the Police on additional technology to provide similar access.

Mr. Stallworth asked when construction on the proposals might begin, to which Mr. Neltner responded it could start by the end of October and would finish by February 2021.

Mr. John Wood, resident of Wilder, Kentucky, stated his opposition to the proposed changes due to safety concerns and his opinion that Fifth Third was encroaching into public space.

Mr. Smitherman stated he thought that Fifth Third was considerate of the safety concerns.
The Commission adopted the staff’s recommendation for Item 3 on the Legislative Discussion Agenda.
Mr. Juech made the motion, which Ms. Wideman seconded.
Ayes: Mr. Smitherman, Ms. Wideman, Mr. Juech, and Mr. Stallworth.
Nay: Mr. Eby.

**Director’s Report**

Mr. Peppers noted that Director Katherine Keough-Jurs, Mr. Andy Juengling, and Ms. Samantha McLean were in Cleveland for the American Planning Association-Ohio conference. Mr. Peppers also stated that the Grovedale subdivision item was still being worked through and would require additional time. Mr. Peppers concluded that the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee had kicked off and that there would be additional information leading up to the Census. Mr. Juech noted the importance of the Census process and its significance to the City.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

Katherine Keough-Jurs, AICP, Director  
Department of City Planning  
Date: 12/14/19

Byron Stallworth, Vice-Chair  
City Planning Commission  
Date: 06/26/19